



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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August 9, 2004

The Honorable Gil Gutknecht
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
Midway Office Plaza
1530 Greenview Drive SW
Suite #108
Rochester, MN 55902

Dear Representative:

This letter acknowledges our receipt of your concerns over the eligibility criteria for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) in the Blue Earth Watershed. I am happy to report that based on your concerns and those voiced by many potential Minnesota participants the quality criteria for determining compliance with the CSP nutrient management provisions was adjusted to form one consistent criteria for the entire Blue Earth Watershed. CSP applicants in both Minnesota and Iowa will be using the same criteria for the current CSP sign-up.

As pointed out in your letter, CSP eligibility in the Blue Earth Watershed was relying on separate and different NRCS state nutrient management standards and the different state university fertilizer recommendations. We are confident that neither university's method to make fertilizer recommendation is right or wrong. Both procedures are based on extensive research and have been produced by internationally recognized professionals. However, using both states' procedures does result in significant differences.

The nutrient management criteria adjustment which was instituted last week will eliminate these differences, except those imposed by state statutes. These changes will result in an equitable CSP sign-up process for potential applicants.

Thank you for writing and as you requested, I will keep your office informed on the number of Minnesota farmers approved in the 2004 CSP. For further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Paul Flynn, the Minnesota NRCS CSP Program Manager, he can be reached at 651-602-7870.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Hunt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "W" and "H".

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist